

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF 'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

No. 185. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JULY 17, 1847.

PRICE 1½d.

THE POSSIBLE.

A curious pamphlet, entitled *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, appeared about thirty years ago, and attracted some attention on account of the strange line of argument adopted by the author. To those who never read or heard of the work, it will seem hardly credible that a serious attempt was made in it to show that we had no proof of even the existence of such a man as Napoleon, though he was then understood to be living in St Helena, scarcely past the prime of life. Apparently the idea amused the public, for the copy before us is of the *fourth* edition, published in 1831; yet it is probable that comparatively few persons, after all, have seen this singular production.

The author starts with a summary of the wonderful acts imputed to Napoleon, but remarks, that in the details of his life there has been almost every conceivable variety of statement; his motives a subject of doubt, and even his military skill denied. In the midst of the controversy, the preliminary question of his *existence* seems never to have occurred to any one as a matter of doubt; that, apparently, has been always taken for granted. But it is found that fallacy most generally attends *undisputed points*; for example, the case of the live fish suggested to the Royal Society by King Charles II—or the following:—'It was objected to the system of Copernicus when first brought forward, that if the earth turned on its axis as he represented, a stone dropped from the summit of a tower would not fall at the foot of it, but at a great distance to the west; in the same manner as a stone dropped from the mast-head of a ship in full sail, does not fall at the foot of the mast, but towards the stern. To this it was answered, that a stone being a part of the earth, obeys the same laws, and moves with it; whereas it is no part of the ship, of which, consequently, its motion is independent. This solution was admitted by some, but opposed by others; and the controversy went on with spirit; nor was it till one hundred years after the death of Copernicus that, the experiment being tried, it was ascertained that the stone thus dropped from the head of the mast, does fall at the foot of it!'

It is also to be observed that there is a disposition to believe in marvellous stories upon insufficient evidence.

It may be said that the existence of Napoleon is notorious; that is, it is much talked about. But then the great bulk of those who talk of Napoleon merely repeat what they have heard others say; they do not speak from their own knowledge. Some may profess to have personally known the man. 'I write not,' says the author, 'for them.' he only begs they will be 'tolerant of their neighbours who have not the same means of ascertaining the truth.'

Any attempt to trace this hearsay evidence to its

source, soon brings us to the *newspapers*. 'Generally speaking, it is on the testimony of the newspapers that men believe in the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte.' The newspapers, whose impudent fabrications are so often spoken of by Englishmen with contempt! Let us examine this evidence. 'First, what means have the editors of newspapers for gaining correct information?' They copy from other newspapers, foreign or British—we know not whence such intelligence comes. Or they refer to private correspondents. Who these are, what opportunities they have of obtaining information, or whether they exist at all, we have no means of knowing. Then the editors of newspapers have an obvious interest in circulating wonderful stories about Napoleon, because it causes their journals to be in demand. It may be said that their party hatreds would prompt them to expose each other's fabrications. Yes; but in doing so, each would expose his own. The political parties represented by the newspapers have a common interest in keeping up the name and acts of Napoleon before the world; for, both being anxious for power—that is, for the disposal of the taxes—both are glad to have him as a bugbear to compel the payment of these imposts. It is not necessary to suppose them in a universal league for maintaining a falsehood; 'most likely, the great majority of them publish what they find in other papers, with the same simplicity that their readers peruse it.'

On the supposition, however, of there being no preconcerted plan for imposing on the public, there ought to be great discrepancies in the accounts. Well, there are. Even the great and leading transactions are represented differently. 'For instance, it is by no means agreed whether Bonaparte led in person the celebrated charge over the bridge of Lodi (for celebrated it certainly is, as well as the siege of Troy, whether either event ever really took place or no), or was safe in the rear, while Augereau performed the exploit. The same doubt hangs over the charge of the French cavalry at Waterloo. It is no less uncertain whether or no this strange personage poisoned in Egypt an hospitalful of his own soldiers, and butchered in cold blood a garrison that had surrendered. But not to multiply instances: the battle of Borodino, which is represented as one of the greatest ever fought, is unequivocally claimed as a victory by both parties; nor is the question decided at this day. We have official accounts on both sides, circumstantially detailed, in the names of supposed respectable persons, professing to have been present on the spot, yet totally irreconcilable. Both these accounts may be false; but since one of them must be false, that one (it is no matter which we suppose) proves incontrovertibly this important maxim—that it is possible for a narrative—however circumstantial—however steadily maintained—however public, and

however important the events it relates—however grave the authority on which it is published—to be nevertheless an entire fabrication!

It must be difficult, the author admits, for the public to think it possible that it can have been deceived so long. Yet we know how larger publics than ours have been deceived about Brahma and Mahomet for a much longer time. To show how, even in this enlightened age, as it is called, a whole nation may be imposed upon, the author relates the following anecdote:—‘It was stated in the newspapers, that a month after the battle of Trafalgar, an English officer, who had been a prisoner of war, and was exchanged, returned to this country from France, and beginning to console with his countrymen on the terrible *defeat* they had sustained, was infinitely astonished to learn that the battle of Trafalgar was a splendid victory: he had been assured, he said, that in that battle the English had been totally defeated; and the French were fully and universally persuaded that such was the fact. Now, if this report of the belief of the French nation was *not* true, the British public were completely imposed upon; if it *were* true, then both nations were at the same time rejoicing in the event of the same battle, as a signal victory to themselves; and consequently one or other at least of these nations must have been the dupes of their government: for if the battle was never fought at all, or was not decisive on either side, in that case *both* parties were deceived. This instance, I conceive, is absolutely demonstrative of the point in question.’

But then many people saw Bonaparte at Plymouth ‘with their own eyes.’ All respect to both the eyesight and the veracity of those individuals; ‘they saw a man in a cocked hat, who, *they were told*, was Bonaparte.’ How could they know that it was really he? How many people have told impossible things, alleging they have seen them with their own eyes! Soldiers may come forward, in like manner, and show the scars they received in fighting against Napoleon’s armies. ‘But,’ says our author, ‘I defy any one to declare, on his own knowledge, what was the cause in which he fought—under whose commands the opposed generals acted—and whether the person who issued those commands did really perform the mighty achievements we are told of.’

What, above all, throws doubt upon the truth of the stories told of Napoleon, is their wonderful nature. ‘All the events are great, and splendid, and marvellous; great armies, great victories, great frosts, great reverses, “hairbreadth” scapes,’ empires subverted in a few days; everything happening in defiance of political calculations, and in opposition to the *experience* of past times; everything upon that grand scale so common in epic poetry, so rare in real life; and thus calculated to strike the imagination of the vulgar, and to remind the sober-thinking few of the Arabian Nights.’ He loses five armies to France, yet ‘so eager are the French to be a sixth time led to destruction, that it was found necessary to confine him in an island some thousand miles off, and to quarter foreign troops upon *them*, lest they should make an insurrection in his favour. To enumerate the improbabilities of each of the several parts of this history, would fill volumes. Let any man, not ignorant of history and of human nature, revolve them in his mind, and consider how far they are conformable to experience, our best and only sure guide. In vain will he seek for something similar to this wonderful Bonaparte.’

The reader is probably by this time prepared to learn that the whole of this odd argument was the production of a learned and ingenious divine—the present archbishop of Dublin—designed to meet the doctrine of a philosopher of the last century—that we ought not to believe any narration of extraordinary events, if they exceed our experience and observation of the world, as in that case an error of the reporters is much more credible. Here is a history transcending all experience and observation, and against the actuality of which

a great deal can be urged, and yet we all believe in it. What, then, becomes of the much-vaunted test, that the allegations should be more probable in their nature than the unfaithfulness or simplicity of the witnesses?

The whole thing is surprisingly clever and telling; and no one would have been more ready to own so much, and to enter into and enjoy the joke, than the very philosopher whom it throws into ridicule. It is not for us to discuss more particularly the bearing of the argument upon religious questions; but we feel inclined to trace its relation to our common proceedings regarding evidence.

It is not, we think, to be denied, that there is a natural disposition to weigh probabilities in the way which the philosopher pointed out: that is, when we hear anything wonderful told, we are extremely apt to disbelieve it, if it seems more likely that the narrator has been deceived, or aims at deceiving, than that the alleged facts should have taken place. But this is not always necessarily to be regarded as an instinct leading us to the best means of ascertaining truth or avoiding error, and guiding us with regard to human testimony. It may be only the exponent of a certain indifference and levity of understanding, which will rather be content with the rejection of novel intelligence at all hazards, than disturbed with new ideas, or at the trouble to ascertain their soundness. Or it may be to some extent a mere habit, induced in the majority by the impossibility they find of sifting all marvels that come before them. Life being too short to allow of this sifting in all cases, we are obliged, in most instances, to make a choice between rejection or credulity, and being determined against the latter, we have no alternative but to disbelieve.

Mr Burton, in his life of Hume, has remarked the accordance of the doctrine with the character of its author’s mind. ‘How clearly,’ he says, ‘do we find these principles practically illustrated in his history! A disinclination to believe in the narratives of great and remarkable deeds: proceeding from peculiar impulses: propensity, when the evidence adduced in their favour cannot be rebutted, to treat these peculiarities rather as diseases of the mind than as the operation of noble aspirations: a disposition to find all men pretty much upon a par, and none in a marked manner better or worse than their neighbours: an inclination to doubt all authorities which tended to prove that the British people had any fundamental liberties not possessed by the French and other European nations. Such are the practical fruits of this necessitarian philosophy.’

If we were always to judge, moreover, by our experience, nothing beyond that experience would have any chance of being fairly treated. It would be setting up a narrow knowledge as a judge upon all knowledge beyond. Men would then be cautious in the proportion of their ignorance, which neither is a fact, nor is it a thing to be desired. Even men who pass as enlightened and knowing, would be unjust to many things, for all knowledge is but a point in the gradations of ignorance. And thus scientific men often are erroneously sceptical, as when they rejected the reports brought to them regarding meteoric stones, or when they (not long since) denied the possibility of severe surgical operations being performed painlessly. On this principle, there would be no progress in knowledge; for whenever an investigator brought out a new truth, he would be met with, ‘Pooh, pooh! Far more likely that you are deceived by your imagination, than that anything so different from common observation should be true.’

However convenient, then, it may be, in common life, to judge of probability in the way pointed out by the philosopher, it evidently becomes a fallacious test when we would try by it any extraordinary fact or series of events on which it is of importance for us to come to a full decision. And yet it will not do to admit everything merely because we cannot be sure how far it is irreconcilable with what we already have reason

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for believing. In that case we should have no protection against the most ridiculous marvels which any ill-designing person might seek to impose upon us. No one certainly pretends to deny that there are degrees of credibility in authorities, and that human testimony can and ought in all cases to be weighed before it is received. Neither can it be doubted that there is a wise caution to be exercised with regard to the reception of novelties and marvels of all kinds, *that being always the most liable to scruple which is most remote from systems and principles already in some degree of credit.* The philosopher, the divine, the judge, all keep fully in view the different estimates to be put upon matters submitted to their judgment, according to these attendant considerations.

Perhaps the best practical point we can arrive at, is to exercise this judgment in the highest extent, but with greater liberality than is generally found towards what is beyond the range of existing knowledge. What seems most necessary to the philosophy of our age, is a larger view of the bounds of the Possible. We need such extensions of our conceptions of human nature and affairs, as the marvels of the Napoleonic era were calculated to give to the man living in the last century. We need such enlargements of our ideas as to physical nature, as the recent discoveries of Faraday are calculated to produce. We would require to take man and society, less as the narrow problem which they form in their more familiar aspects, and more in connection with the great unseen influences which preside over the world. Were this the case, the tone of the public mind would become less rigidly material, less coldly sceptical than it is. A vital, generous, and ever-aspiring faith would succeed, and the progress of our race would be proportionately advanced.

A S E A - P I E C E.

SKETCHED IN A PASSENGER'S LOG-BOOK.

THE ship 'Maria,' Captain Roberts, of Bristol, had for the last ten days kept good hold of the north-east trade-wind, steering 'full and by,' or large before it; a few points off her course, indeed, but going all the while not less than ten knots an hour. Scarcely a yard had been touched during that time, and the crew had been occupied chiefly with odds and ends about the rigging, mending sails, making spars; not more than one watch being generally on deck at once under the mild régime of Captain Roberts. By the time he thought fit to keep the ship away to westward, we had already run down almost into the latitude of the West Indies; but a fortnight's sail of longitude remained still to make. At breakfast-time the starboard braces were taken in, the yards slanted sharp across, and a course given for the helmsman to steer, instead of the wind itself, as a direction to him.

The Maria leant at first briskly over in the morning breeze, which rushed against her with a plash of deep-blue waves, one of which would every now and then wash up through the bulwarks, and trickle in several streams down her sloping white quarter-deck into the lee-scuppers. Every change at sea is welcome, and this itself produced a difference in the appearance of things more lively than can be appreciated by a mere landsman. Up above the weather-taffrail you only saw now a narrow line of azure waters, closed by the yellow tacks of the sails hauled fast into the bulwark; while to leeward, all was spread out, fresh and rolling, in so far as ropes and canvas allowed. To windward, on the level of the horizon, which wore a strong, steady gush of colour from the breeze, could be perceived the faint shape of a large vessel, seen distant daybreak; and when the ship rose on a wave, that distant speck seemed to grow clearer through a half-open port, which admitted the cool draught, with a keen blue glimpse of sea and air, over the muzzle of a carronade. Towards mid-day, however, the wind had not only shifted a little, but began to leave us: now and then the sails, which had

so long remained asleep before its constant force, shivered one above another, as if with a sudden convulsion, and then filled out again. The ship was kept away another point; the quarter-deck awning, as usual, was spread; and much was it needed; for at noon, when the captain came up with his sextant to take his observation, the hot breaths of air between the last puffs of the breeze smacked most unequivocally of the line. The free, regular movement of the sea was falling gradually into longer and slower undulation, that proceeded not from the atmosphere, but from the ocean itself, and was evidently the forerunner of a calm. Its colour, changed from strong, sprightly blue, to pure opal, or that tint called by painters ultra-marine, had insensibly become most beautiful; and lying in that dazzling, cloudless sky like a heaving image of it, reflected every ray of the perpendicular sun upon the bosom of a broad and glassy swell, that lifted us without ever breaking. I looked over the side to notice the good Maria's present speed, and calculated she did not make three and a-half knots an hour, with allowance for the confusing motion of mingled swell and wave.

Notwithstanding all this tranquillity, the captain, who had accidentally consulted the barometer, ordered the crew 'to get their dinner over as sharp as possible.'

'Have you made that vessel out yet, sir?' continued he, taking up the telescope from under the capstan, and looking at the ship in the distance, which had grown more distinct.

'Nothing more,' I said, 'than her being a large three-master, with all sail set, and apparently before the wind.'

Even as I spoke, the dim figure of the far-off ship came out into strange vividness, so as to be almost startling, as if a sudden gleam of the most intense light had fallen upon it. It was, however, the gradually-deepened hue of the horizon, behind which had thus been expressed for a moment the number of her masts, and the very whiteness of her sails. The phenomenon became more striking, palpable, distinct; and then by degrees, as if a veil had been interposed, or she had sunk into a dusky film beyond, the ship ceased to be visible at all. On the place where she had disappeared—what a seaman would call the eye of the wind—there grew a dark-gray spot, that changed to indigo, and, like a leprosy taint, was diffusing itself in the sky, and creeping along the horizon, till the whole sea-line to windward was of a deep livid black, relieved against a sullen neutral-tint, as if an unseen darkness were beneath. Still to leeward all was 'clear and bright, while the sun was hot as a furnace-breath overhead. All at once, again and again, the sails collapsed with a sound like the explosion of a carronade, and we were all aback, the vessel rolling helplessly on the long smooth swell; and then they were as suddenly distended as before. The mate, who had been standing by the compass, now stepped to Captain Roberts, and mentioned that the ship would not steer her course. 'Call the hands,' was the reply. 'All hands, there!' shouted the mate. 'Square away the yards,' said the captain; and in an instant all was pulling, hauling, and the creaking sound of the heavy yards swinging round in their iron pivots. I leant over the side, looking into the glassy blue water, which seemed to subside visibly to oily stillness, nothing being audible but the quick jerks and jolts of the almost useless wheel, by which the sailor under the round-house stood listlessly. A dim green form rose up out of the depths under my sight to the very ribs of the ship; and as I gazed down upon the hideous head of the monster, with its sharp back-fin actually clear of the surface, for the first time in many years I recognised a shark. The stillness and isolation, the breathless hush which pervaded the whole ship, with the hot, oppressive air, reminded me of the scene in Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner,' which I had been reading lately, and I lifted my head, if only to verify my connection with human companions. I was at first surprised to see the sky and horizon before me again clear, and for an instant fancied

that the threatened tropical thunder-storm had passed as suddenly as it came, leaving only a shadowy trace upon the sea. It needed but the next moment's reflection, while in the act of looking round, to convince me that the vessel had simply shifted her position unawares during my meditation; although to a landsman it is curious, for the first time, when in a calm he sees himself opposite, all on a sudden, to some object on the contrary side of the horizon. It is impossible in any other way to realise so much the feeling of total helplessness, of dependence upon the free winds of heaven, as when, thousands of miles from land, you watch the compass which the steersman has left, and perceive the ship's headmark successively coincide with every point in the circle. The captain's voice, as it broke the silence, was absolutely startling.

‘Man the fore and main clue-garnets—brail up the courses.’

‘Ay, ay, sir!’ And this slight renewal of activity fell cheerfully in. As the two broad sheets of lower canvas rose gradually up to the yard, however, they revealed the whole livid background, towards which the ship's head, with its white bowsprit and flapping stay-sails, was now directed. The short interval had served to extend it already into a huge bank of sullen vapour, that concentrated to cloud, obliterating the division of sea and sky, and seeming to steal near rather by the deepening of its gloom, and the spreading of its crescent-wings, than by actual motion. The brassy glare which smote upon its western edge from the sun gave to the sight a still and terrible beauty, out of which, next instant, one expected to see the lightning dazzle forth, and to have his hearing confounded by some insufferable trumpet-blast of thunder. Underneath and round, the whole ocean, so lately of the keenest blue, lay leaden-coloured and dull; heaving, as it were, from the other horizon into the obscure bosom of the thunder-cloud, with one long, faint, noiseless undulation, upon which a cork would not have dipped. The continued clearness of the opposite sky rendered it more striking; but what was most impressive about the scene, was the contrast presented by the occasional clank of the rudder-chains, and jerk of the wheel, to that utter stillness of the great spreading exhalation, surcharged with thunder, light, and rain, if not with tempest.

‘Let go the royal and to'gallant halliards,’ cried Captain Roberts; ‘and you, boys, lay aloft and furl them. On deck there stand by the topsail halliards. I expect we shall have more water than wind just now,’ continued the captain, as he came aft to me under the round-house. For half an hour little more was said indeed—all standing at their posts, in no mood for conversation, which at sea people seldom are when anything important is in suspense. Meanwhile the gloom deepened, and the vast thunder-cloud appeared to climb, with its palpable top, up the vault of heaven, till it hung overhead, and projected far behind us. A muttering growl ran round at intervals in the distance, and the sea was calm as glass, and pale by contrast. At last there shot forth, as if from an abyss of darkness, one forked, dazzling, zig-zag flash, with which the very bosom of the cloud seemed for a moment to grow luridly transparent; and sails and masts appeared to quiver together at the explosion which burst above, like the breaking up of the firmament. Still all was hot, breathless, and without wind; the deck like heated iron, the pitch-seams sticking to the feet, and the vessel slowly making the circuit of her compass with the horizon, one side of which still lay hard and livid against a cloudless atmosphere. Flash followed flash, peal succeeded peal; and once a meteor-like ball of light appeared to crown the main sky-sail mast-head, and to play along the royal yard. At every flash one could see the faces of the men standing in groups, motionless and rigid, by the ropes where they had been stationed. Suddenly, from the edge of the cloud above us, with the hiss of a thousand cataracts, and a feeling as

if the vessel were at once submerged, there descended a sheet of rain so unbroken, so compact, that for the instant one gasped for breath. From side to side the whole ocean was one white, confused mass, ploughed up by the falling torrent, and faintly luminous as the fresh water mingled with the salt element, whose lazy, sullen swell meanwhile rose higher, in spite of the absolute calm. The deck itself was in a minute's space knee-deep with water, over and above what the scupper-holes could discharge; and at every slight roll of the vessel, ropes, buckets, and other incumbrances were washed about one's legs. For a whole hour did this uncomfortable state of things continue; the rain finally lessening, the gloom passing to leeward, and the sudden swell subsiding, till the sea lay even more dead-smooth and glassy than before, and the saturated canvas began to steam up under the heat. In the quarter whence the thunder-storm had come, was now spread a heavy blue haze, which, as it darkened, seemed to promise something more. This time, however, it was the wind. From under the foot of the ominous veil there moved towards us first a line of deep indigo, then a keen, kindling streak of white, that lengthened as it came, like dust beneath the wheels of innumerable chariots, accompanied by a far-off murmuring hum. A light puff blew the three tall topsails aback for a moment, and then as suddenly left them hanging vertically; and the yards were hauled at a little round to meet it. Still all was calm near at hand, the rudder not even jerking, when all at once the smooth sea swelled up beside us, of an inky blackness, as if it would rise over the bulwarks, and swamp us bodily. As suddenly, responsive to the element beneath, the gallant little Maria rose high upon the huge unbroken undulation; and then, with a howl of fury, the squall caught her.

‘Port, port!’ shouted the captain; ‘down with the helm!’ and it was as much as the grizzled old seaman beside it could do, assisted by the mate, to grind round the wheel and meet the wind, as the ship unexpectedly found steerage-way, and her head-sails payed her off. She leant over with her larboard gunwale under water, and the yard-arms almost seeming to touch the wave-tops as they rose; while the force of the blast gave her scarcely time to rise, burying her head every now and then in a dark-green sea, that washed aft to where we stood. For the first few minutes all was confusion; ropes thrown down, the crew shouting as they hauled, and scrambling as well as they could into the weather-rigging to reef topsails. The whole scene, although fearful, was most spirit-stirring. I stood holding on by a backstay to windward, at peril of being drenched even on the quarter-deck, as the man at the wheel luffed a little to take the wind out of the sails for the reefers. It was thrilling to look up and see the men creep down to leeward on the yard, and push out the foot-rope as they leant to handle the bellying canvas, stiffened with wind and rain; their blue and red shirts relieved against the wild, desolate sky, which had lately been shut out by the broad sails; and the half-seen faces of the old hard-a-weather sailors at the ears, looking white with stern, rude energy, as they turned them round. Behind there was nothing but a rising outline of tumultuous water, indigo-coloured, and a thick white mist beyond, from which the vessel fled, amidst the steady roar of the tempest, into the darkness that had left her in its rear. Cheerily, however, went the three diminished topsails up to their stretch; and the Maria, when kept away from the wind again, climbed the huge waves more easily, shaking the sea from her bows like a fishing-coble in a breeze.

Soon after this, the appearance of the weather had altered for the better. The wind had moderated to a breeze, and the reefs were shaken out of the topsails, and top-gallant sails set again, although there was still a heavy sea on. The Maria was now close to the wind, and leant steadily over as she ploughed the dark waves, while now and then over her weather-bows there burst a white cloud of spray. She was running right on into

the yellow light of sunset, which was visible low down between the troughs of the sea, and behind the blue line of the horizon as her white bowsprit lifted. In place of the late dark cloud to windward, lay a hazy bank of gray vapour, whose eastern wing slowly crept into the clear azure space of sky beyond. When we rose at intervals, I fancied I could discern on that open horizon to eastward the dim figure of a vessel in the distance—apparently the Indianaman we had seen before the squall. Suddenly I perceived a keen point of silvery light kindle in the very centre of the spot, and the form of the ship seemed to be defined by it. Taken together with her appearance in the daytime before the squall, it at first recalled to me the legends of the 'Phantom Ship' and the 'Flying Dutchman,' which are current amongst sailors. The idea then occurred to me that the vessel was on fire, and I remarked it to Captain Roberts. Next time we rose, however, my mistake was discovered by the beautiful phenomenon before us. The large bright circle of the rising moon was half extended around the far-off ship, and a faint tract of light trembled across the distant waters; along which she seemed to be pursuing her way into an arch of silver radiance, the gate to some other world. Next time, the round disk was just clearing the horizon, and appeared about to lift the ship with it, as on a shield, into the upper air. Then at last, the moon ascended the sky; and like one too late, the ship was holding on alone to the darkened verge: while upon the green wave-tops near us there gradually fell a broken lustre, and hour after hour the Maria pursued her westward course, followed by the glance of that large, full, glorious planet, such as she is never seen in the cold northern climes.

THIEF-MAKING AND THIEF-TAKING.

The frequent publication of prison reports and criminal statistics of late years, has led many persons to imagine that crime is greatly on the increase. But the number of misdemeanours and offences now every day recorded by the public press, is to be attributed rather to more efficient police arrangements, than to any deterioration of private or public morals. A glance at the history of crime in London will serve as an instructive illustration of this fact. During the past, and even in the present century, the bringing of criminals to justice was a trade in which any one might engage; and petty crimes were regarded as unprofitable stock—not worth the trouble of trial and conviction, and as necessary evils in a crowded community. Offences against the person were then much more frequent than in the present day, and acts of violence were often committed with impunity. It was unsafe to travel the roads in the vicinity of the metropolis after nightfall; even in the most crowded thoroughfares, persons were knocked down and robbed. According to Mr Colquhoun, a magistrate who published a work on the Metropolitan Police in 1797, there were at that time 115,000 persons 'who were supposed to support themselves in and near the metropolis by pursuits either criminal, illegal, or immoral.' The chief causes by which the ranks of this army of depredators were recruited he considered to consist in the large number (3000) of houses for the reception of stolen property, and of low taverns. The latter, he says, were the rendezvous of thieves: in the tap-rooms, men, women, and children might be seen crowded together; while the landlords, in too many instances, were either the leaders, or in the pay of gangs of thieves. The value of the property annually plundered he estimates at £2,100,000; adding, that no improvement could be expected, as the 'watchmen and patrols were comparatively of little use, from their age, infirmity, inattention, or corrupt practices.' By the authority of various acts of parliament then in force, the reward for the conviction of an offender was then fixed at £40; the consequence was, that those who made a trade of catching thieves took no pains to capture a criminal while he

was graduating through the minor degrees of crime, and brought him to trial only when he had committed an offence which, in their phraseology, 'made him worth £40.' Mr Colquhoun gives a tabular statement of 1088 individuals brought before the London magistrates in one year, comprising eight sessions, 1790-91. 'The melancholy catalogue,' he tells us, 'does not contain an account of above *one-tenth* part of the offences which are actually committed!' Out of the 1088 offenders, 711 were discharged as not worth the risk and trouble of prosecution. To this statement we may append the returns for 1841: in that year, with a population double that of the former period, the number of convictions was 2625.

But if we go back to the commencement of the century—the era of Jonathan Wild and his confederates—we find a still worse state of things. Human life then seemed to possess but little value in the estimation of the dispensers of the law, or of those who lived in defiance of the law. Wild, as is well known, traded in blood, and sold his victims to the gallows with a ferocious effrontery that finds no parallel in modern times. Perjury was resorted to on all occasions, either to save a friend, or ruin an enemy, as circumstances required; and there is too much reason to believe that those in authority winked at the audacious evasion of justice. The execution of the notorious thief-taker in 1725 had the effect, for a short time, of putting an end to the nefarious system which he had so long successfully practised. During his trial, Sir William Thompson, the recorder, told him that when the act was framed under which he was indicted, he had him (Wild) in mind, and knew he would one day be caught by it: a remark which savours strongly of the coarse feeling of the times.

The numerous rewards, however, for the apprehension of offenders, sanctioned by the legislature as the best means of protecting person and property, were too strong a temptation to be resisted by the vicious and evil-disposed. Before ten years were over, a gang of heartless wretches were again swearing away men's lives, sharing the rewards as prize-money amongst themselves, and every time they received a payment, holding what they called a *blood feast*. It is difficult to believe in the reality of such atrocities; but the murders committed by Burke and Hare within the past twenty years, and the recent instances of parents poisoning their own children at Stockport, to obtain the burial-fees, prove how much the natural feelings may become perverted when deprived of efficient moral control. At the period in question—about the middle of the last century—the scheme was so artfully contrived, as for a long time to defy detection. Evidence of the kind to secure conviction was never lacking. Beaumont and Fletcher seem to have been acquainted with similar miscreants and their proceedings, for they make one of their characters, Bartolus, describe—

* Substantial, fearless souls, that will swear suddenly,
That will swear anything.
* * * * Be sure of witnesses;
Though they cost money, want no store of witnesses;
I have seen a handsome cause so foully lost, sir,
So basely cast away for want of witnesses.

At length, in 1755, the villainous transactions of the gang were brought to a close by the persevering exertions of Mr Joseph Cox, constable of Blackheath hundred, who the following year published a narrative of the proceedings, in which he says:—'The wicked and diabolical practice of thief-making and thief-taking, and of convicting poor friendless lads who never were thieves at all,' was introduced about twenty years before, and had increased in consequence of the rewards for the suppression of robberies.

The confederates in this case consisted of five or six men and one woman, under a leader named Macdaniel. At first their practice was to swear a robbery against any individuals with whose names they chanced to be acquainted, and press for a conviction, in spite of the

accused party's asseverations that he had never been near the spot. This villainy, however, having been detected in one or two instances, they adopted means afterwards to entice their victims to the scene of the pretended robbery. Sometimes they attended the Old Bailey sessions, and 'marked' such prisoners as they thought likely to suit their purpose, observing that 'they would be sure of him again in a sessions or two.' At other times, one of the party would accost three or four lads whose habits and character were such as to give colour to the charge, and after treating them to drink, invite them to take a walk, which he always contrived should be towards the locality already fixed on for a robbery. In the course of the day or evening, the lads were taken to a notorious tavern in Black Boy Alley, or to some lodging-house known to be frequented by thieves, where, at a preconcerted hour, the thief-takers came and apprehended the whole party. When before the magistrate, the confederates contrived to have their man admitted evidence, and scarcely ever failed of obtaining a conviction at the next sessions, with the reward of L.30 or L.40 for each conviction.

Another plan of which these villains availed themselves for carrying on their designs with greater impunity, was to hire a room, and after placing in it a few articles of furniture or merchandise, entrap some unsuspecting victim into the robbing of it. Or they advertised the stoppage of stolen goods, with full description, which left the advertiser free from suspicion. The latter scheme, however, was only put in practice a day or two before the assizes, that the friends of the accused might be prevented, by want of time, from exposing the treachery. But the chances of discovery were braved; the fellows never hesitated to swear anything to carry their point; the real residence of the 'decoy-duck' was scrupulously concealed; but if by any chance he was arrested, the prosecutor swore he was not the thief. 'As for what the poor creatures themselves said,' writes Mr Cox, 'it stood for nothing, although they loudly declared their innocence, and with their dying breath would acknowledge they ought to die for the sins of an ill-spent life, but protested their being innocent of the fact for which they suffered.'

The ranks of the thief-takers, it is said, were continually recruited from the criminals annually discharged from Newgate, where they had received an apt education. In most cases the magistrates refused to hear informations against them, and the attempt to press these informations was exceedingly dangerous. In one year, 1749, they divided the enormous sum of L.6300, which had been paid to them for convictions in the county of Middlesex. If the robbery were laid in an adjoining county, the reward was greater; and we read of eight convictions producing L.1120. It is not surprising that the villains were unwilling to abandon so profitable a trade, one to which they were encouraged by short-sighted legislation. In some instances, however, their prey escaped them. One of the gang meeting Lyon Alexander, inquired if he wished to earn a shilling; the youth assented, and on going to the house indicated for a bundle, was shown into a room, where half-a-dozen men began to maltreat him. They dragged him through the streets to Wapping, bruising his fingers with their sticks whenever he attempted to cling to the railings; and crossing the river to Greenwich, gave him in charge to the constable for highway robbery. The lad was committed to Maidstone jail, where he found another youth accused by the same gang; and the assizes not coming on for a week, they wrote to their friends, who fortunately were able to employ counsel, on which the prosecution was abandoned. On another occasion, two youths, one of them not more than thirteen, were saved by the exertions of the foreman of the jury. Although unable to secure their acquittal, he suspected the falsehood of the charge, and by an appeal to the proper authorities, obtained a pardon; and the confederates, who had cunning enough to deceive the

court, jury, and nearly all concerned, were disappointed of their booty.

The manner in which these villainies were at last effectually exposed is worthy of record. A robbery was planned to take place at New Cross, near Greenwich, so as to insure the increased reward on conviction beyond the limit of Middlesex. Salmon, one of the gang, after drinking with two young men of indif-ferent character, persuaded them to bear him company in his walk down the Old Kent Road. Towards midnight he loitered behind, when Blee and Gahagan, two others of the gang, came up and robbed him of two pairs of leathern breeches, which he carried under his arm, with a tobacco box, and some other trifling articles. The thieves went off immediately to the rendezvous, where they were soon after followed by Salmon and his two unsuspecting companions. After further drinking, part of the stolen property was secreted on the persons of these two, when Macdaniel appeared and arrested them on a charge of highway robbery preferred by Salmon. Mr Cox's suspicions were first excited on learning that Macdaniel was well acquainted with Blee, who, although included in the charge, was yet at liberty. He therefore, with most praiseworthy perseverance, made a point of arresting Blee, the decoy-duck, unknown to Macdaniel, the mock prosecutor. The decoy immediately made an open confession, on which warrants were issued for the arrest of the chief confederates, to be served as soon as they had given their evidence on the trial of the two men at Maidstone. The apprehension of Blee was kept a profound secret; and the shortness of the interval before the assizes proved fatal to the party, who, with their usual confidence, went down into Kent to attend the trial. On descending from the witness-box after giving evidence, each one was quietly secured and handcuffed, though not without risk, as Macdaniel always went armed. Salmon was immediately committed for contriving his own robbery; and the other three, in spite of the leader's subterfuges, as accessories and abettors. It was, however, found, that through some defect in the law, they could not be tried on the capital charge. The case was argued during several days before the twelve judges, which ended in an indictment for conspiracy, by order of the lords of the treasury. The four criminals were soon after brought to trial, and condemned to imprisonment in Newgate for seven years, and to be set twice in the pillory. On their first public appearance, they were with difficulty saved from the fury of the mob. Gahagan was struck dead by a missile hurled from the crowd; and had it not been for the sheriffs, not one would have escaped popular vengeance.

Eventually the woman, Mary Jones, came in for her share of the punishment. A poor wretch named Kidden had been tried and convicted on her accusation of robbing her on the highway between Tottenham and London. Notwithstanding the prisoner's protestations of innocence, and the appeals of his friends to the secretary of state, he was condemned to be hanged. Some passages in the letters he wrote, while waiting for execution, mark the harsh treatment of prisoners at that period. In one, he informs his sister that he has no fire; and though black and blue with lying on the floor, is to be double-ironed. In another, he thanks her for sixpence, which she sent him, 'for,' he adds, 'we have nothing allowed us but one penny loaf a-day.' Blee afterwards confessed that Kidden was entirely innocent, and Mary Jones was committed to Newgate for wilful murder; on which Mr Cox concludes, 'I could not entertain the thoughts of relinquishing the pursuit, till I found these monsters fixed in those dreadful apartments appointed for the reception of the delinquents in the shedding of blood—the destroyers of the repose and tranquillity of the human race.'

An attempt to revive the blood-money system appears to have been made about the year 1816; but its promoters—Vaughan, a police officer, with some others—were sentenced to five years' imprisonment in Newgate;

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to what extent they had carried it was never known. Since that period, as far as we can learn, it has not reappeared; and any efforts to put it in practice at the present time would certainly fail of success. We could wish, for the sake of humanity, that the annals of crime were not made blacker by such fearful records; and though such deeds may not be committed now, places still exist in London where individuals may be hired to conjure themselves—to swear to anything for a consideration. Such blots can only be removed from our social condition by a true education—which, while informing the mind, improves and regulates the moral feelings.

G U T T A P E R C H A.

THERE are some substances in nature which appear expressly intended to fill a sphere of utility peculiar to themselves, and for which no substitutes, or virtually none, seem capable of being discovered. Caoutchouc was one of these, *gutta percha* is another. This substance is of recent introduction into England, having been first brought under the notice of the Society of Arts in the autumn of 1843. The history of its discovery is thus given by Dr Montgomerie:—'While at Singapore in 1842, I on one occasion observed, in the hands of a Malayan woodsman, the handle of a *parang* made of a substance which appeared quite new to me. My curiosity was excited, and on inquiry, I found it was made of the *gutta percha*, and that it could be moulded into any form, by simply dipping it in boiling water until it became heated throughout, when it became plastic as clay, and when cold, regained, unchanged, its original hardness and rigidity. I immediately possessed myself of the article, and desired the man to fetch me as much more of it as he could get. On making some experiments with it, I at once discovered that, if procurable in large quantities, it would become extensively useful.' The discovery was communicated to the Medical Board of Calcutta, and subsequently to the Society of Arts in London, and the announcement met with immediate attention in both quarters. Orders for considerable quantities were transmitted, and the *gutta percha* trade, for such it has become, assumed a definite organisation.

The tree from which it is procured is stated by Sir W. J. Hooker to belong to the natural order *Sapotaceæ*. It is found in abundance in many places in the island of Singapore, and in some dense forests at the extremity of the Malayan peninsula. The discoverer having applied to the celebrated and enterprising Mr Brook, requesting him to make inquiries for the tree at Sarawak, and on the west coast of Borneo, received the following communication from that gentleman:—'The tree is called *Niato* by the Sarawak people, but they are not acquainted with the properties of the sap: it attains a considerable size, even as large as six feet diameter; is plentiful in Sarawak, and most probably all over the island of Borneo.' The tree is stated to be one of the largest in the forests in which it is found, frequently attaining to the diameter of three or four feet, and occasionally to that above-mentioned. The timber is valueless for building purposes, on account of the loose and open character of its tissue; but the tree bears a fruit which yields a concrete oil, used for food by the natives. *Gutta percha* is contained in the sap, and is thus procured:—A magnificent tree of fifty, or perhaps one hundred years' growth, is felled; the bark is stripped off, and a milky juice, which exudes from the lacerated surfaces, is collected, and poured into a trough, formed by the hollow stem of the plantain leaf. On exposure to the air, the juice quickly coagulates. From twenty to thirty pounds is the average produce of one tree. This wasteful, sinful procedure, is adopted to a very large extent, as may be conceived from the amount of the *gutta* now imported reaching many hundreds of tons annually. The inevitable consequence of such an extravagant short-sightedness it is not difficult to predict; and we may confidently expect,

that if measures are not taken to remedy the evil, *gutta percha* will in time cease to form an article of commerce, and exist only as a rarity in the cabinets of the curious, or in the hands of the instrument-maker. There is every reason to believe, could this greedy spirit be restrained, that an abundant supply might be obtained by simply making incisions in the bark of the tree, as in the case of the caoutchouc trees, and thus a perennial supply would be insured.

Gutta percha comes to us in two forms: the one in which it is in thin films or scraps, something similar to clippings of white leather; the other in rolls, which, on a cross section, show that they are formed by rolling the thin layers together in a soft state. When pure, the slips are transparent, and somewhat elastic, varying in colour from a whitish-yellow to a pink. In the mass it is seldom free from some impurities—such as sawdust, pieces of leaves, &c.—which must be removed before it is applicable for some of the more delicate uses proposed for the substance. It is purified by a process called 'devilling,' or kneading, which is done in hot water: the water soon dissolves some of the foreign matters, and washes out others, until after a short time the *gutta percha* is left in a mass, ductile, soft, and plastic, of a whitish-gray colour. Or this is more simply effected by dividing the substance into fragments, and then submitting them to a slightly prolonged boiling in water. From the docile nature of the material, neither of these processes is attended with the difficulties attaching to the manipulation requisite for caoutchouc. *Gutta percha* thus prepared for use possesses very curious properties. Below the temperature of 50 degrees, it is as hard as wood, but it will receive an indentation from the finger nail. It is excessively tough, and only flexible in the condition of thin slips: in the mass, it has a good deal the appearance, and something of the feel, of horn; its texture is somewhat fibrous; and from the resistance it offers to anything rubbed across it, it appears that it was first used as a substitute for horn for the handles of knives and choppers. By an increase of heat, it becomes more flexible, until, at a temperature considerably below the boiling point of water, the once rigid, tough, and obdurate mass becomes like so much softened bees'-wax. It is now easily cut and divided in any manner by a knife, and may be moulded into all varieties of form with the greatest ease; or may be cut and united again so perfectly, as scarcely to exhibit even the appearance of a joint, and possessing all the strength of an undivided mass. From a number of very small fragments it is quite easy to form a coherent mass, as firm as if no division had taken place. Whatever be the shape into which the *gutta percha* is now formed, it will retain precisely the same form as it cools, hardening again to its previous state of rigidity. A ball one inch in diameter was completely softened by boiling for ten minutes, and regained its hardness entirely in half an hour. It is an important fact, that these processes may be alternated any number of times without injury to the material. It is in a great measure devoid of elasticity, offering a striking contrast to caoutchouc, but its tenacity is little less than wonderful: a thin slip, an eighth of an inch substance, sustained a weight of forty-two pounds, and only broke with the pressure of fifty-six pounds. It offers great resistance to an extending power; but when drawn out, it remains without contracting in the same position. When in its hard state, it is cut with incredible difficulty by the knife or saw. Like caoutchouc, it burns brightly when lighted, disengaging the peculiar odour accompanying the combustion of that substance; like it also, it is soluble with difficulty in ether and other caoutchouc solvents, but very readily in oil of turpentine.

We may now properly consider the applications of this substance. The solution appears to be as well adapted as that of India-rubber for the manufacture of waterproof cloth, and for the other purposes to which that liquid is now applied. In the solid state, it is in use among the Malays principally for the purpose be-

fore mentioned; and they adopt it in preference to wood and horn, even where the latter is attainable. There are a number of cases also in which it appears likely to become an admirable substitute for leather, possessing, as it does, some properties in common with, and some vastly superior to, those of that material. Its value has been readily recognised by our inventors, no less than six patents being already in existence having reference to this material. In these it is proposed to apply gutta percha as an ingredient in mastics and cements; for the manufacture of a thread which is used to form piece goods, ribbons, paper, and other articles; as a substitute for caoutchouc in binding books; for waterproofing boots, shoes, and other articles of apparel; for the manufacture of flexible hose, tubes, bottles, &c. But the most comprehensive is the patent of Mr Hancock, who has instituted a series of curious experiments upon this remarkable substance. He unites the gutta percha with caoutchouc and another substance called *jintawcan*, by which an elastic material results, which is impervious to, and insoluble in, water. The hardness or elasticity of the compound is easily determined by the alteration of the amount of gutta percha: the latter is added in larger quantity if firmness is requisite, and vice versa if flexibility and elasticity are necessary. From this mixture a very curious substance, light, porous, and spongy, is prepared, suitable for stuffing or forming the seats of chairs, cushions, mattresses, &c.; it also forms springs for clocks, clasps, belts, garters, and string. By an alteration of the process, much hardness is acquired, and moulds and balls of the material are capable of being turned in a lathe, and otherwise treated like ivory. In this state it offers itself for a thousand other offices: thus it may be formed into excellent picture-frames, incredibly tough walking-sticks, door-handles, chess-men, sword and knife handles, buttons, combs, and flutes. It has also been proposed as a material for forming the embossed alphabets and maps for the blind, on account of the clear sharp impression it is capable of receiving and retaining. It has been suggested that it would make a good, certainly a harmless, stopping for decayed teeth. It is also an excellent matrix for receiving the impression of medals and coins, and is valuable on account of its subsequent non-liability to break. By mixing a proper portion of sulphuric acid with it, or adding a portion of wax or tallow, it may be reduced to any degree of solubility, and furnishes a good varnish, quite impermeable to water. Mr Hancock proposes such a fluid as valuable for amalgamating with colours in printing: it appears probable that this will form an extensive application of the discovery, and that colours so printed will prove as lasting as the fabrics on which they are impressed. Time alone, however, can determine the extent to which gutta percha will be applied in the useful and ornamental arts. There appears no doubt that it will soon become an article of commerce as important as, if not more so than, caoutchouc itself; and we believe that its persevering discoverer will have on many occasions, and for many years, to rejoice over the benefits he has been the means of conferring upon the present age by its introduction.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

MUSICAL COPYRIGHT.

GLORIOUS Robert Burns! When George Thomson wrote to him, asking new songs for the old tunes and offering remuneration, he said—' You may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. . . . To talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright prostitution of soul. A proof of each of the songs that I compose *I shall receive as a favour.*' When, ten months after, Thomson sent a gift of money, Burns replied—' I assure you, my dear sir, you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. . . . As to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear, on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the bypast transaction, and from that mo-

ment commence entire stranger to you.' He was then an exciseman at fifty pounds a-year. Afterwards, when he had seventy, Mr Perry of the 'Morning Chronicle' offered him fifty-two guineas per annum if he would furnish once a-week an article for the poetical department of the newspaper. ' This offer,' says Dr Currie, ' the pride of genius disdained to accept.'

Burns was doubtless unreasonable on this point. He might have accepted from both Thomson and Perry with perfect propriety. It shows, however, the nice delicacy of the man, that he refused these tithes of mint and cummin. It also shows the small progress which mercenary ideas had then made amongst the men who exercised their intellects for the gratification of the public.

Contrast with this an announcement of the newspapers of our day, that, by a decision in the Court of Queen's Bench, a song cannot be even sung in public without the permission of the composer, under a penalty of at least forty shillings for each offence, the proprietor of the place where the song is sung being liable to the same penalty! Money, money, money!—always money! For this, it now fully appears, the composer melts us with the tender strains of love, seeks to inspire us with a love of country, or strikes our souls with pity and terror by calling up the ideas proper to a battle or a shipwreck. He aims at softening and refining us by his elegant and delightful art; but a toll must be paid as we walk up to his temple, under a forty-shillings penalty. Imagine Tyrtaeus composing capital war-songs to inspire his countrymen against the Persians, and then, when the soldiers were all ready to go on to battle singing them, ' Oh no, my dear friends,' interposes the bard; ' as individuals, you are welcome to sing my songs as long as you please; but as you now propose to sing them *in public*, I must have a consideration.' Think of the Troubadours squabbling for 'considerations' every time they sung each other's romances in abbey refectory or baron's hall; Thorold defending his romance of *Rollo* from a piratical recitation by Wace, and Wace prosecuting Thorold on account of his *Brut d'Angleterre*. Verily the times are changed since then.

We submit that, while it is but right that a man should be remunerated for the productions of his intellect, the tradesman part of the business ought surely to be as much softened as possible. To tell a man that he may gather a petty impost, if he can, upon every collection of people to whom one of his productions is presented, is to degrade him. Surely, too, the public could not well pay for their gratification in a way more cumbersome or uneconomical.

PROTECTION AGAINST THE SUN IN HOUSES.

We are now at a period of the year when the great enemy of comfort is no longer cold, but heat, and when workmen more especially, plying their occupations in sheds, attics, or other apartments with roofs exposed to the sun, suffer severely. A cheap and simple expedient for diminishing the temperature of such places has been recommended by a correspondent; and it proceeds upon a principle so perfectly well known, that it is surprising this obvious application of it should now come before us with anything like the air of a discovery. The gentleman complains, however, that nearly a year ago he published a statement on the subject in a provincial journal, and that since then not a single attempt has been made to test his plan, even in the town where the paper is printed. The principle refers to the heat-conducting and radiating powers of coloured substances. A thatched roof, more especially when new and bright, however warm it may keep the house in winter, preserves it comparatively cool in summer; while tiles receive and retain heat in proportion to the depth of their colour; and slates are worst of all, becoming so hot when the sun shines, that it is painful to touch them with the hand. In like manner, the warmth of our clothing depends upon the same circumstances. In

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winter, we very properly wear dark, and in summer light colours; and in most tropical countries the natives are clothed exclusively in white.

Our correspondent mentions a case in which a woodturner was absolutely driven from his business by the heat for two or three hours in the day. His workshop had a slated roof slanting to the south; and there being a small steam-engine within the building, the heat from this source, added to the heat from the roof (for there was no ceiling or plaster inside), raised the thermometer to 104 degrees, when it was 80 degrees out of doors in the shade. The remedy recommended was simply to *white-wash the roof*; and this had the effect of equalising the temperature within and without. 'The slates,' he adds, 'which before were so hot on the under side that they burnt the hand, were scarcely warmed by the sun after the whitewashing.' The materials, we are told, will not cost sixpence for a roof sixteen feet square; and if well sized, even a fortnight's continued rain will have little effect. Such a surface, therefore, might be renewed once or twice in the heat of summer, at a very trifling expense; while, if greater permanence were desired, the same result would be obtained by means of white oil-paint. The published paper of our correspondent concludes thus:—'While writing on the subject of cooling upper rooms, allow me to suggest an additional means of cooling all rooms, upper or lower, by means of a hole made in the wall, as near the ceiling as possible, with a sliding wooden shutter working horizontally in a frame, which may be opened or closed at pleasure. An opening one foot square, with frame and shutter complete, may be made for eighteenpence.

As the above suggestions are not the offspring of theory or imagination, but the results of practical experiment, and as their immediate adoption would greatly increase the health and comfort of thousands of your readers, without putting them to any inconvenient expense, I have no doubt you will kindly give them insertion.'

GRANDMOTHER HOOK.

A FEW evenings ago, I was at one of those old-world houses in Edinburgh where a man may actually invite himself to tea, and, without being stared at as a curiosity, take his place in a circle round a round table, dominated by a steaming urn. I would describe this tea-drinking as a relic of the olden time; but just now I have something else to do. Suffice it, that besides myself, there were at table an old maid, a young maid, the father and mother of the latter, and a gentleman-like man somewhere on the wrong side of forty. This man was the lion of the party, and performed wonderfully well. He was not like the caged animal, strutting up and down to show his paces, and growling, grinning, or yawning at the spectators; but resembled rather the free denizen of the forest, leaping and romping by turns, dignified or playful as occasion called; now making the room ring with his voice, and now 'roaring you 'an 'twere any nightingale.' In short, I was prepared to like the man very much; and seeing likewise that he was unusually good-looking for a male animal, you may imagine that I was not a little startled to hear that he had very recently been made a Benedict, and, strange to say, with a lady recognised under the appellation of Grandmother Hook!

The company, however, made themselves very merry with the poor gentleman's calamity; and the old maid especially was never weary of asking questions, seeming to derive a certain savage comfort from the idea of a lady getting married in her very grandmotherhood. The gentleman was at first a little embarrassed; but his tormentors being his near relations, it was necessary to answer; and at length, making up his mind to what

could not be avoided, he pulled a desperately grave face, and began to tell them 'all about it.'

'You may wonder,' said he, 'that at my mature years I had fallen so completely into my uncle's power as to give him the almost absolute disposal of my hand; but such was the fact. I was brought up, you know, to the very worst thing under the sun—expectations; and, consequently, I was good for nothing else but to keep on expecting. I spent many years as a walking gentleman of society in London, and many more in wandering to and fro upon the continent; but at length, when actually within hail of forty, I found myself once more with my legs under the mahogany of the Atheneum, and with nothing to pay for the good things above it but what came out of the pockets of a tough, and somewhat peremptory old man.'

'He had never before insisted upon my marrying; but the reason was, that he had remained in constant expectation of the occurrence taking place through my own connivance. Indeed it had been his business for many years to interpose gently between me and the catastrophe; suggesting now that I did not know enough of the lady, and again that I knew too much; and so forth. The fact is, I had never been without expectations of that sort; always voluntarily abandoned, till my first crop of gray hairs appeared. After this, the difficulty was on the side of the lady; and I was at length so much disgusted by the unreasonableness of the sex, that I determined to live and die a bachelor. Just at this moment I received a letter from my uncle, which I can repeat from memory, as it was short, and to the purpose. "DEAR NEPHEW—I am glad to hear of what you call the vacancy in your heart, as you will thus have no difficulty in fulfilling my wishes, and obeying my solemn injunctions. You have promised several times to marry, and you *must* now do so. I never interfered with your choice, and you are not to interfere with mine. The widow and heiress of my old comrade Hook is in the market. Our estates run into each other in such a way, that you might comprise them both in the same ring fence. She is a healthy woman, and not too young; and the arrangement is, that you are to be married at the end of her year of mourning, if she can fancy you."

'If she could fancy me! The widow of old Hook! and a healthy woman indeed! That touch was horrible. I thought my uncle must have intended it to try the extent of my loyalty; and I do not know that I had ever a fit of more bitter reflection than while conjuring up the idea it conveyed.' Here the lion paused, and wiped his forehead. The old maid bridled and tossed her head, as much as to say that, in her opinion, the like of him was not so mighty a catch for ladies beyond their girlhood; while the young maid trusted, sympathisingly, that as aged men have sometimes youthful wives, the case might not have turned out so very dreadful after all.

'That,' said the gentleman, 'did not fail to occur to me, and it gave me considerable comfort; for owing, I suppose, to the idle life I had led, I had not yet got rid of the ideas of romance that are so unfit for mature years like mine. It was one thing to indulge my despair in old bachelorhood, and quite another to carry my broken heart into the domestic society of an old woman. I confess I did hope that Mrs Hook owed her good condition at least to some lingering remains of youth; but a second letter from my uncle, in reply to my remonstrances, dissipated at once the fond illusion, by informing me that the widow's family could be no

possible objection, her only daughter being well married!

'There was no help for it. It was necessary to turn my meditations from the lady to the estate; and if I thought of the ring at all, to fancy it within a ring fence. But the affair could not be slept over any longer; and I set out for my uncle's seat, having previously signified to him my full acquiescence in his plans. In due time I arrived at the little town of Enderley, distant only a few miles from my destination. And here—'

'Never mind the little town!' interrupted the old maid. 'Come to the seat at once, and let us hear about the introduction, and how the lady looked.'

'Healthy, I hope!' said the young maid with a sneer, fixing eyes of beautiful contempt upon the lion.

'Ladies,' said the gentleman in a tone of depression, 'it is natural that I should wish to linger for a moment at this crisis of my fate; and besides, it was at Enderley I heard—and with cruel suddenness—of a circumstance connected with my intended, which made me at first determine to rush back to London, and, if necessary, take to street-sweeping, authorship, or any other desperate resource, rather than marry that Mrs Hook. I was passing a half-open door in the hotel, when I heard a female voice addressing a child in the terms of wise endearment consecrated to the rising generation. "It shall go," said the voice, "and so it shall, to its own gran—granny—grannyma; to its own—own—own—grannyma: that it shall, so it shall—wont it, I wonder?—to its own—Grannyma Hook!" Only think, my dearest ladies, what my feelings must have been, on thus learning (and the fact was confirmed the next minute by the landlord, in reply to my hurried questions) that my intended, old, and healthy bride was an absolute grandmother—Grandmother Hook!

'I intended to have gone on at once to my uncle's place, but that was now impossible. My agitated mind demanded repose. A night's reflections were necessary to arm me with sufficient philosophy to meet the destroyer of my peace; and engaging a bed at the inn, I went out to walk in the neighbouring wood. The locality was not chosen without a motive; for I knew that from the summit of a low hill, at a mile's distance, I should obtain a view of Enderley Court; and I felt that if anything could reconcile me to the idea of the healthy old widow, it would be the spectacle of her castellated mansion, seated in a park, which is a very paradise of beauty.

'There is a strange sympathy,' continued the lion musingly, 'between the soul of man and the aspect of nature. It would seem as if the waving line of beauty, described by hill and valley, embraced in its folds, and endowed with its charms, the possessor of the enchanted spot; as if the melody of woods and waters mingled with the mortal voice that owned them; as if the peeps of sky caught through embowering trees flung an azure glory upon the eyes to which the timber belonged!'

'Beautiful! beautiful!' broke in the mother for the first time; 'and as true as it is beautiful! Jemima, my love, that is philosophy.' Jemima looked coldly and distrustfully at her parent, but remained silent; and the old maid, who was obviously interested in Mrs Hook, remarked in a tone of soliloquy, that she was sure we should find her turn out to be a respectable and interesting woman.

'That was just my idea,' remarked the worshipper of nature, when he had cooled down. 'Every step I advanced reconciled me more and more to the old lady; and when I saw the glancing of a trout stream through the trees, I thought even of a hook without disgust. But just at this moment a sound broke upon my senses which disturbed me with recent and disagreeable associations; it was the squeal of a young child, and whisked off my thoughts at once to a hale, hearty, long-living grandmotherhood. Visions of canes and snuff-boxes rose before my eyes, everlasting coughs rattled in my ear, and, worse than all, the glances of matrimonial love

from the eyes of a grandmother froze my blood. How different were the sights and sounds of reality as I turned the corner of a clump of trees! The infant I had heard was lying on its back on a grassy knoll, fighting up with its little clenched fists, and crowing, as the nursemaids call it, with all its might; while bending over it, with eyes brimful of love and laughter, poking its tiny ribs with her fingers, snatching wild kisses from its brow, and seizing its neck with her lips as if she would throttle it, there knelt a young woman; and such a young woman! I did not think she could have been quite thirty.'

'Thirty! the old creature!' exclaimed Miss Jemima. 'The girl was probably a nursemaid?' remarked the old maid.

'She was neither an old creature nor a girl,' said the lion in a king-of-the-forest tone, 'but a woman in the very prime and glory of her years. Her bonnet was lying on the grass, and her dishevelled hair floating in dark masses over her shoulders; but a visible diadem sat on her queenly brow, just as a voice of peremptory command was felt in her light, joyous, leaping laugh. There was a fearless self-possessed grace in her manner, such as years superadded to the feminine softness of youth; and her features, originally moulded in wax, were now as firm, yet as exquisitely fine, as if they had been cut in the semi-transparent marble of Paros. While feasting on the beautiful picture formed by the mother and her child—surely that must have been the relationship?—a little incident occurred to disturb in grouping. The infant, with shriller squeal of delight and a more vigorous spasm of its limbs, suddenly rolled down the knoll, crowing as it went; and the lady, with a playful yet nervous cry of surprise, stretched after it in vain as she knelt, till she measured her whole length upon the sod. Before she could get up, I had sprung from my ambush, caught up the truant as it lay half-smothered in daisies and buttercups, and presented the prize to the flushed and startled mother. Such was my introduction to—to—'

'Not to Mrs Hook!' said the old maid with severity. 'You forgot that you are now a married man!'

Miss Jemima was tearing absently the petals of a narcissus, and looking up with a forgiving sigh into the face of the narrator, said softly, 'But you were not married then!'

'To describe the conversation of this fascinating woman,' continued the gentleman, 'is impossible. She was not a woman of society, yet perfectly well-bred. She had spent the greater part of her life in the country, inhaling health of mind as well as body from the pure air of heaven, yet with occasional visits to, and occasional visitors from, the great cities, which enabled her, with the assistance not only of books, in the good old-fashioned sense of the term, but of the ephemeral literature of the day, to keep pace with the progress of the world.'

'I do not know how it was, but our acquaintanceship seemed to be ready-made; and when at last I mentioned my uncle's name, she had no difficulty in recollecting that respectable friend of Mrs Hook. At the word I started as violently as if she had thrown the old lady's grandchild at my head; and the beautiful stranger looked at me with surprise and curiosity.'

'You know Mrs Hook?' said I.

'Yes.'

'What—old Mrs Hook?'

'Yes.'

'Grandmother Hook?'

'Yes.'

'How do you like the individual?'

'I sympathise with her; for I too—' And breaking off with a sigh, she held up the fairest hand in the world, as to show a widow's ring. I had not observed the peculiarity in her slight mourning, but now saw that she, too, was a widow—a young and charming widow!—and that the infant (which was now alternately in her arms and mine) was the pledge of a love extinguished

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in the grave! She was free—this lovely young woman; and I was about to be chained for life to Grandmother Hook! She saw my agitation, but of course could not comprehend its cause.

"Come," said she with an angelic smile, "I see you do not like my venerable friend; but I am determined to reconcile you to her. She is a grandmother, it is true, and therefore not so young as she has been; but she wears well—she is indeed particularly healthy; and thus, if you form a friendship for her, it is likely to last for many years."

"That is the misery," said I—"that is the misery! If she were but like other old women—if she were but liable to the common diseases of grandmothers, my fate might be endurable!"

"Your fate? What has your fate to do with the longevity of Mrs Hook?"

"I am only going to be married to her—that's all;" and the absurd announcement was no sooner out of my lips, than the fair stranger broke into peals of laughter, that to my ears, at the inauspicious moment, sounded like the screams of an evil spirit.

"Pardon me," said she, endeavouring to compose herself; "I am far too giddy for a—" And the widow kissed her orphan child. "But the idea of a marriage between you and Mrs Hook is really too ridiculous. You appear to be compelled to the sacrifice by circumstances; but has the old lady given *her* consent?"

"Her consent! oh, let her alone for that: it is not so often that a fellow like me comes in the way of a grandmother. There is no hope of her refusing me; and if I refuse her, I may as well hang myself up on one of those trees."

"Why adopt such an alternative? Although probably dependent on fortune, you are not too old to work and to struggle. If you will not allow poor aged Mrs Hook to enrich you, there are fortunes in the world still to be made by the adventurous and the industrious."

"Give me a motive," cried I suddenly, "and I will both dare and suffer! I cannot toil for so poor a meed as fortune; but place in the distance something worthy of my efforts, something rich enough to reward them, something—"

"What?" said she innocently.

"Love!" cried I in desperation; and before she could prevent me, I had caught hold of her hand, and smothered it with kisses."

"Upon my word!" interrupted the old maid. "This from a married man—from the husband of Mrs Hook!"

"But he was not married then!" whispered Jemima softly.

"Since you are displeased with such details," pursued the gentleman, "I shall pass them over. Let it suffice that I spent several hours with the lovely widow; that I saw—clearly saw—that only a little time was wanting to enable me to gain her affections; and that I at last bade her adieu, extorting a promise that she would not communicate my arrival to Mrs Hook; and that, when I called at the Court, she would see me alone, that I might have an opportunity of telling her what had passed between my uncle and me."

"Pray, what was the lady's name?" said Miss Jemima, as the lion paused.

"I never thought of asking."

"How could you tell that she lived at the Court?"

"I don't know: I took it into my head; and it happened that I was right."

"Under all circumstances, you seem to have made wonderful progress in so short a time!"

"Time is merely a relative word. An hour is occasionally as long as a day or a month; and a month, in other circumstances, passes as quickly as a day or an hour. The widow and I became better acquainted during the single interview I have described, than we should have done in the course of a hundred meetings in ordinary society. But to proceed. I found my revered uncle in a very bad temper, as he had expected

me the day before; and matters were not mended when I mentioned frankly some misgivings I had on the score of domestic happiness.

"Domestic fiddlestick!" cried he. "What more would you have than a good estate and a good wife—and a healthy woman to boot, come of a long-winded race, and as likely as not to lay you beside my old friend Hook? She is a grandmother already: does not that look well?" I laughed nervously.

"You do not think her too young?" and the old gentleman grinned. Another spasmodic cacklin.

"Then what ails you at her—more especially since you tell me that there is 'a vacancy in your heart?' But here comes a letter from the Court." And tearing open a large old-fashioned-looking missive, presented to him by a servant, he read as follows:—

"MY DEAR SIR—I am told that your nephew has arrived; and as he has been reported upon favourably by one who saw him yesterday, and on whose taste and judgment I can rely, I am tempted to say, with the frankness of my character, that I shall be happy to make his acquaintance. I am truly grateful for the many obliging things I am told he said of me; and I hope one day or other he will find them all realised. My dearest grandchild sends a pretty little kiss to you both; and, with best regards, I remain as usual,

GRANDMOTHER HOOK."

"There!" cried the old gentleman with odious triumph—"there is a spirit for you! Why, you dog, you will be as happy as the day is long!"

"I scarcely heard him, for my thoughts were brooding bitterly over the treachery of the beautiful widow. She had broken her promise, and she had rendered my position a thousand times more embarrassing, by persuading the wretched grandmother that I had been such an ass as to say complimentary things about her age, ugliness, and infirmities! It was clear that she was a jilt; that she had only been laughing at my admiration; and that she was now determined to extract further amusement from my calamities. I resolved, however, to die game; and telling my uncle that, although well acquainted with Mrs Hook from report, I desired to see her personally before coming to a final decision, I threw myself on horseback, and galloped straightway to the Court.

"It was my intention to have asked for Mrs Hook; but the wily widow was on her guard, for as the door opened, I heard her call to the servant, in her silvery tones, "Show the gentleman here;" and in another minute I stood once more in the presence of the unknown of the forest. I found her more beautiful—better dressed—younger than the day before; and as I saw, with keener appreciation, the treasure I was about to lose for ever, my resentment died away, and deep choking grief took its place.

"You forgot your promise," said I: "you make a sport of my misery!"

"What could I say when questioned?" replied she sweetly. "But what misery do you allude to?—the misery of marrying a grandmother?"

"When my heart is devoted to another. But it is needless to talk to you, for you are as incapable of passion as a statue. You could never have loved even your husband."

"You are in some degree wrong; yet I was so young when I was married—only sixteen—that I looked upon my husband more as a guardian than as a lover. I was not quite seventeen when I became a mother."

"Is it possible? That is not a great while ago."

"Greater than you perhaps suppose; for a sound constitution and salubrious air are very deceitful. Would you take me to be well on to thirty-five?"

"What became of your child?" cried I suddenly.

"We all marry young in our family," replied the widow, hanging her head. "It was my daughter's infant," she continued, looking up at me with the most beautiful blush that ever lit the cheek of a girl, "which you gathered yesterday from among the daisies and buttercups; and I am GRANDMOTHER HOOK!"

'Well, I declare,' said Miss Jemima, as the lion finished, 'that is as like a romance as any real story I ever heard! Only an author would never make his heroine a horrid old thing of thirty-five.'

'I am glad, for the sake of morality,' remarked the old maid, 'that she turned out to be Mrs Hook after all: only I cannot help thinking it a shocking example for girls to be grandmothers.'

THE WORKING-MAN IN AUSTRALIA.

A YOUNG man, who had just finished his apprenticeship in London, and who possessed a fair knowledge of house-carpetting, having been informed that higher wages were to be obtained in Australia, set sail for the antipodes, and in due time reached the town of Sydney. Here he learned, on landing, that a letter of credit in which he had invested his all—some fifty or sixty pounds—was worth little or nothing, the person on whom it was drawn having failed; and he thus found himself loose upon the world, with a tolerably good outfit for one in his station, but a very scanty supply of cash in his pocket.

After anxiously seeking employment, and in vain, for about three weeks, he fell in accidentally with a cedar-cutter from the Five Islands, who had been living there with his family under a few sheets of bark, but who now wanted a snug little hut run up; and with him the emigrant contracted for the job, on consideration of receiving £.75 in money, with rations during the time, and the assistance of a convict servant in cutting the timber and other work. All being arranged, he set out early one morning on foot, with his convict-mate, for their destination; and in the evening their fatiguing march was enlivened by an Australian conflagration. 'Above us,' to use his own words, 'the sky was gloomy and still; all round us the far-stretching forests exposed a strange and varied pageant of darkness and fire, accompanied by the crackling of flames and the crash of falling trees. Here was a bridge over a deep creek, now empty with summer drought, with all its huge sleepers glowing in red charcoal, and tumbling together into heaps in the channel, and carrying down with them the top layer of slabs that, covered with earth, had been the roadway; over these we had to leap and clamber as we could, unless there was some track down across the creek-bed, by the side of the bridge. Here, again, some huge old tree came thundering down right across the road, and its boughs, kindling from the opposite side, were in full roaring blaze, lighting up everything nigh with ruddy brilliance, and throwing into the dense volume of smoke above a red semi-transparency. Farther on again, where the bush was thinner, and the materials for ravage more scanty, the fire had nearly subsided: all was obscure and silent, except some single trunk, off in the bush, hollow, and old, and headless, through whose chimney-like barrel went upwards, with fierce steady roar, a volume of flame, and crowds of sparks, into the blackness of night; and then, all on a sudden, the fire would reach a cluster of tree-heads, as yet untouched, and go blazing, and crackling, and leaping through them, until nothing was left for it to devour. The heat was in many places intense, and the smoke in others suffocating; whilst snakes, guanas, bandicoots, opossums, &c. were crossing the road in every direction, each in its natural dumbness, or with its wild weak cry of fear.'

The next two nights they passed in huts, where they were received with much hospitality. One consisted of a single apartment formed of bark; while the other was a more aristocratic habitation, built of slabs of wood; but in both the fare was good and substantial. The next day they arrived at a creek, where the only means of crossing was a slender cabbage-tree flung from bank to bank (the rustic bridge of Australia), which the emigrant found somewhat formidable, till the idea occurred to him of *fancying* himself 'walking along the joist of an unboarded house.' This exercise of the imagination was successful, although there must have

been some little discrepancy between the two bridges; the cabbage-tree swinging over the abyss as the passenger stepped, till in the middle it plashed upon the water.

Having at length reached their destination, they set to work to fell trees for the future hut, living themselves, in the meantime, in a tent composed of a few sheets of bark, 'leaned together, top to top, tent-like, with one end stopped by another sheet, and the fire a few feet in front on the ground at the other.' This was very well in fine weather; but by and by it came on to rain—with a will. The rain penetrated the roof, and ran through the bottom of the hut like a mill-stream, till their beds got thoroughly soaked. Dick, however, got a flint and steel; and when they had relighted the fire, baled out the water, and solaced themselves with plenty of tobacco and tea; they made their beds (luxuriously turning the dry side uppermost), and went to sleep.

The next adventure was with bushrangers, two of whom called at the hut one night, and after a very moral, not to say philosophical conversation—in which the emigrant was told that 'if he acted as a man, whether he were free or bond, he would be respected by every man that knew himself'—compelled the mate to pilot them to the employer's farm. Soon after, they returned with a load of rum, tea, sugar, and tobacco; and after eating a hearty supper, set off into the bush with their booty.

This job being completed, and the balance of money paid, it was necessary to look out for farther employment; and the adventurer, shouldering his tools and other baggage, set forth to walk through the cedar forest. He at length reached a hut, the master of which wanted a mate in sawing, and here he remained till his employer's task was finished. 'We used to get up,' says he, 'in the winter, and have our breakfast before going to work, on account of the day being so short in the cedar-brush. The lifts in a cedar-brush are very heavy. I have often worked for half a-day together with a lever that I could barely lift into its place. Besides this, the only intermission through the day is one hour at noon for dinner, and perhaps twenty minutes towards the latter part of the afternoon, fifteen of which the topman employs in brightening up his saw, and the pitman in boiling a couple of pots of tea and throwing the dust out of his pit; the other five are occupied in a very active lunch. Both men, if they are smokers, just light their short pipes, and turn to with them in their mouths. If any man can, without exaggeration, at night say he is as tired as a dog after a hard day's run, it is the cedar-sawyer. A striking peculiarity of the class is their colour, or rather deficiency of all colour. A few months' residence and hard work in the brush leaves most men as pallid as corpses. Probably this is chiefly the effect of shade, but promoted further by excessive perspiration; for it is not necessarily attended by any sensation of illness.'

When this job was completed, his capital amounted to about £.80, a portion of which he invested in cattle, putting them out to pasture to the number of thirty-three, 'on the thirds,' that is to say, giving up a third of the increase for their keep. His next job was on the banks of the Hawkesbury. Here he found, in passing along, the maize or wheaten cake, the joint of pork or beef, and the fragrant pot of tea, always ready for his refreshment, with abundance of pumpkins, preferable, he says, to any vegetable used in England, and watermelons too delicious to be described 'in mere words.' The native white girls, by a natural association of ideas, come into the next sentence; and he describes them as being very generally pretty. 'I do not know how to account for it, but there is common to them, in all points, a singularly marked feminine character—a gentle, simple womanliness, that is peculiarly agreeable.' After finishing his employment on the Hawkesbury, he was cheated of £.20 in the settlement, being compelled to take a portion of the amount due to him in cattle,

charged at a tyrannical price.

But a wretched Sydney, he said, was his 'pass' circumstance was a common one.

One evening the marksman, he said, undertakes him if he directly or course of marked out first of the constituted my character, passionate with perhaps in with attached me minutes along with rather me time he did sawing was treated, he was not he fell in white pants for a conclusion became his my first was sooner in I felt I was conclusion more I felt sentiment above what reason.' returned in time 'the clear to be

In the and work did with floated of been sun there were of must have midnight dungheats more than themselves were no us; but and crabs light we a vast distance the plants tipedes with it. In the hours; the rising by we had no us. As solved by the hut; and we could water that the

charged at double the proper price. This is described as a *tyranny*, for which the working emigrant has practically no redress.

But a worse *tyranny* followed. On his way back to Sydney, he was arrested on the road, on pretence that his 'pass' was forged, and confined all night with every circumstance of hardship and indignity. This, it seems, was a common casualty among the working emigrants; as likewise the ceaseless and savage floggings to which the convicts were subjected.

One evening at Sydney, when loitering at the edge of the market wharf—for after his late laborious employments, he could not all at once prevail upon himself to undertake a new engagement—a lad in a boat asked him if he was going up the river. 'The thought directly struck me that I would do so; and the whole course of my future life was, I may say, immediately marked out by a single step. This little event was the first of the particular train of circumstances which has constituted my whole subsequent adventures and settled my character. It led, in the first place, to my becoming passionately fond of books; and, again, to my meeting with perhaps the only woman I should ever have fallen in with whose character could have permanently attached me. We pushed off from the wharf, and in five minutes were in the middle of the bay, and crackling along with a pretty fresh breeze under all the sail (and rather more) that the boat would carry.' For some time he could find no employment, although wood-sawing was abundant. He was civilly, nay hospitably treated, but still looked upon with suspicion—because he was not a convict like his neighbours. At length he fell in accidentally with a young Australian (of white parentage), with whom he was destined to work for a considerable time, and whose sister eventually became his wife. 'The reader will probably smile when my first remark about my new abode is, that I was no sooner in it, and seated, and had looked about me, than I felt I was at last at home. I have come fully to the conclusion, and especially do so the older I am, and the more I feel what mind is, that there are certain pre-sentiments derived from reason, yet in themselves far above what we conceive of the nature and province of reason.' The next morning, after an hour's stroll, he returned into the hut to breakfast, and saw for the first time 'the very person he had always wanted—this was clear to him directly he saw her.'

In the meantime, however, it was necessary to work, and work he and his mate (the future brother-in-law) did with great energy, till in the middle of it they were floated off by a sudden rise of the river. 'The day had been sunny, and the night was temperate and still; there was, in short, no indication whatever where we were of falling weather. Some such, however, there must have been somewhere; for about an hour after midnight I was disturbed by R— shaking me, and felt on the instant of waking a most unforgettable sensation—I felt as if I were lying stretched on a cold dungheap.' It was somewhat worse; for they had little more than time to get upon a cedar plank, and save themselves, by catching hold of a tree. 'Where we were no dead timber of any size could be swept against us; but we could hear it striking together, and grinding and crashing in the river, a few yards off. The little light we had dazzled our eyes, so that the sky seemed a vast dark void. The rats swam boldly up, and got on the plank with us, and numbers of spiders and centipedes were crawling in all directions over both us and it. In this state we had to continue at least three good hours; then day began to dawn. We knew we were rising by getting more and more near the branches; but we had no notion how deep the water had become around us. As the deep obscurity of the brush began to be dissolved by the dawn, we could discern no vestige of our hut; and presently, when the light so far increased that we could see as far as the pit, we discovered that the water was up to the bottom of the log that was on, so that there was about six and a-half feet depth. Although

it was now light, we were nearly as bad off as ever. The sounds of such a deluge in the night, in the midst of the brush, are certainly cowering to the spirits; but one knows so well that the danger, except from actual drowning, is next to nothing, and there are such plentiful means for escaping by getting up the trees, that, after all, it makes no very serious impression. The loneliness and fear of starving were what most affected me: we could not tell but it might last for many days; and as long as it lasted, there seemed no hope of getting across the river. On this side we were so surrounded by brush, that any attempt to get our plank through to the high ground was out of the question; and it was much too deep to wade. The raw chilly air of the morning, and the water together, made me shiver until I was quite sick, and my mate was not much better. We both of us felt that to continue exposed thus, without food, would soon wear us out, so that we should not be able to make an effort to save ourselves by swimming the river. In this undecided and helpless state we passed the time until nearly noon, the water rising higher and higher. They at length determined to drop down the river from tree to tree on their frail bark, and ascend in like manner a creek at some distance, leading up to a part of the country that was not inundated; and this they accomplished; 'but so tired of the uneasy saddle on which we had now been for many hours, and our legs so benumbed, that we actually could not stand on them, but crawled up the range to the high road on our knees. I was not well for years afterwards; indeed I attribute to the wet and cold of this night an illness I had long subsequently. If I were to say I have never been entirely well since, I should not misstate the fact; and I know of no other cause which I could suppose to have brought about so suddenly this change for the worse in a constitution hitherto uninjured.'

Notwithstanding this accident, they continued working hard, sending or taking great quantities of timber to Sydney, and our intelligent mechanic's little capital increasing in proportion. He at length purchased a considerable addition to his stock of cattle; and his friend having likewise some property of the same kind, they set out to look for a 'run' for them, determining to employ a stockman of their own to look after them. In this journey they met with some of the miserable natives. 'Our night's quarters were rendered still more memorable and comfortless by the blacks having had a battle here that afternoon. Three dead bodies were lying on the flat, with the ghastly grin of those who have died the hater's death. Two of them had been killed by body wounds with jagged spears, that had torn their way out frightfully; the other's was a head-wound with a tomahawk. The weapon had gone right through his mat of woolly black hair into the brain: very little blood had flowed; but the "gins" (black women) told us he died almost instantly. As I came in from looking after my horse, I passed them as they lay cold and prone in the thin misty moonlight, each on the spot where he had fallen. The wife of one of them—a fine, but small Hercules-like figure—sat, or rather reclined, by him, sobbing as if her heart would break. Another was quite a lad; and the other an old gray-bearded man, who had been a great warrior in his day. Nobody was near either of them.'

In this journey, which occupied a month, he passed near a true wilderness. 'Never-ending forest, with here and there a little meadow-like spot, covered with the coarse grass called "blade of grass;" a geographical surface so varied, wild, and wonderful, that you seem to be in another land; great unfathomable gulfs of woody valley, irregular and bewildering ridges, a flock of kangaroo, or a scarcely less wild flock of bush-cattle galloping down upon you, at a charge pace, to within a few feet, and there standing, encircling and staring at you, and then, at the first motion of an arm or sound of a voice, wheeling and tossing their heads, and shorting and bursting away like a living hurricane through

the crashing bush: such was the scenery.' In such wilds it is common for unwary persons to lose themselves; and the desolate, treeless plains occasionally met with are nearly as dangerous in this respect, the wanderer getting speedily out of sight of any intelligible landmark.

Near the 'run' they at length pitched upon they found several other stock stations, where the people seemed to have very confused notions of the rights of property, clapping their own mark, without ceremony, upon any cattle found without one. 'But it is worth while to observe, that an individual placed in the midst of such a gang, and keeping himself free alike from meddling on the one part against them, and from participation on the other, is in one of the surest of positions; for, in consideration of his forbearance, they will generally do him any service in their power, heading homeward his stray beasts, giving tidings of any lost ones, and a hundred other little offices of like kind.' But the utility of the branding does not appear to be quite clear after all, since the animals themselves are not a consenting party, and in many cases treat the ceremony as a very idle affair. 'I have known beasts break three strong ropes one after the other, charge everybody out of the yard, and then go over a six-rail fence at a flying leap, and get away unconquered to their wilds again.' Such rebels of course choose their own pastures, frequently in the wild grassy gullies of the mountains, whither they are tracked by individuals technically called gully-rakers, a kind of freebooters, who mark the desert-born families of the fugitives, and carry them off.

Having marked their cattle, the next business was to construct a dairy for milking such as chose to submit to the operation; and this was done by digging a hollow in a hill, in order to avoid the excessive heats. They now sent butter to Sydney, and sat fairly down as farmers, giving up entirely the trade of wood-sawing.

Our author's advice to the settler, from personal experience, is this:—1. Let him, by way of an introduction, put his knapsack on his back, and penetrate on foot to the utmost limit of colonisation, to learn the science of living in the desert. 2. Let him then begin by feeling his way, laying out not more than a third of his capital at first, whatever it may be. For the rest he will receive high interest; and in the meantime his food and clothing will not cost him £30 a-year. 3. Let him look to everything himself, and join personally in all the labour of the farm. 4. Let him treat his hands well, if not from feeling, from policy. To these general rules are added directions for the more immediate business of settling, for which we have no room.

With the exception of a wild adventure into which our ex-sawyer fell, through some informality in his purchase of the cattle, and some little fighting with the aborigines, there is nothing besides in the memoir of special interest to the reader; although we ought to mention one incident in compliment to the author himself—his marriage. The young couple now opened a general store, for the supply of the neighbouring stations; and although avoiding wine and spirit-dealing from conscientious motives, they contrived to make £300 per annum by the business, although the original capital invested was not more than that sum. 'My wife was the almost sole manager of this portion of our affairs, from the beginning to the end, which was better than seven years. My occupation consisted in bringing the goods from Sydney, looking after our cattle, and getting in every year such a crop of one thing and another as quite covered our own consumption; wheat, maize, potatoes, and tobacco being the staple. My two sons, as they grew up, took kindly, as almost all the Australians do, to rural occupations. The eldest I left chiefly at the out-station, and the youngest was mostly with myself and his mother at the farm I first settled on. My own health at last took such a serious turn for the worse, that the doctor advised a return to my native clime. The hardships I had endured in the early part of my career in New South Wales, along with too great acti-

vity afterwards, were the only probable causes for it. I may say that, for years, I slept in wet bedding. The damp is so great in the perpetual shadow of the cedar-brush, that when, during a more than usually long stretch of wet weather, our blankets have become palpably wet, and we have attempted to dry them at the fire before going to bed, the steam would reek up from them as if from a boiling copper. Again, in the bustle of such an active life as mine, one has not time to be ill by instalments, and so I suppose the whole debt of this kind which nature claims of us has to be paid at once. The excitement of strong purpose probably keeps off the sense of exhaustion till this becomes downright illness, and will not be any longer neglected. Suffice it, that there appeared no alternative. When I first arrived in New South Wales, the perspiration used to flow profusely during the hot days; it now was substituted by a constant burning heat, without the slightest moisture; and at times by a sense, for hours, of icy coldness, while to the eye the whole atmosphere was, as it were, in a blaze, and the surface of the earth too hot for the feet to stand, for more than a few seconds, bare on the sand. It may be of advantage to some in the colony who have begun to experience similar symptoms, to learn that, though the voyage was trying, and the cold very painful in England when I first arrived, I am now obtaining the most sensible benefit, and consider myself in the direct road to completely renovated health.'

We have now run through this little narrative; which, the reader will perceive, contains matter that will amply repay his trouble in referring to the volumes themselves, entitled 'Settlers and Convicts, or Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian Backwoods,' published by Charles Cox, London.

CHARLES EDWARD AT PRESTONPANS.

BY D. M. MOIR (Δ.).*

[Written after walking over the Field with Robert Chambers, on the Centenary of the Battle, 21st September 1845.]

Grain and cloud-begirt the morning
Rose from out the German wave;
Blindly landward clouds of vapour
Through the woods of Seaton drove;
While, amid the dewy stubble,†
Eager for the approach of day,
Promised beneath their planks and war-cloaks,
Side by side two armies lay.

Tolled forth 'six' the clock of Preston,
Woke from dawn to day the morn,
And the first red streaks of sunlight
Gilded Westfield's branching Thorn;‡
Then the billowy hosts dispersing,
As the light breeze came and went,
Showed the Highland host in silence
Threading downwards from Tranent.

* [Reprinted, with the concurrence of the author, from the *Dumfries Herald* (newspaper).]

† The army of Charles Edward moved from the west to the east side of Tranent, after it had become dark, on the evening preceding the battle, and bivouacked, stretching along the northern face of the slope, from the churchyard eastwards. The Prince himself lay in a bean-field, amid the cut bunches, which were still on the ground, near the farm-house of Green Wells.

‡ This venerable tree in part remains, but the main trunk was blown down in 1833, after having been very much injured by the quantity of fragments abstracted by visitors in the shape of relics. The field was visited by Sir Walter Scott in 1821; and a small drinking-cup, or *quaich*, constructed from a portion of the thorn, hooped with silver, and suitably inscribed, was prepared, to be presented to him on the occasion of a second promised visit, by Mr H. F. Cadell, of Cockenzie, at whose house he spent the afternoon. That opportunity, however, never took place, the symptoms of Sir Walter's last illness having shortly afterwards shown themselves; and the *quaich*, consequently, still remains in Mr Cadell's possession.

It was under this thorn, which stands as nearly as possible in the centre of the battle-field, that Colonel Gardiner received his death wound; and hence, to the eyes of many, the spot where the Christian soldier fell is, to use the words of Collins, covered by

— 'a sweet sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.'

* This
vol. ii. chap.
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‡ An eye
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Shrilly blown, the Royal trumpet
Bade each corps its place assume;
Steeds were mounted, muskets shouldered,
Glittered flag, and nodded plume:
Rose the mists up like a curtain *

To the ceiling of the sky;
And the plain's wide diorama
Lay displayed before the eye.

Fast they closed, two hostile armies,
Hostile, yet of kindred blood,
Till the ranks of either's vanguard
Face to face opposing stood:
For a moment all was voiceless—
Every heart in prayer was hushed;

Then each clan struck up its pibroch,
And the mass to battle rushed!

Boom on boom the deep-mouthed cannon
Raked the ranks with crimson glare;
But the clansmen scrupled their bonnets †
O'er their brows with dogged air;
Clenched their teeth, unsheathed their broadswords,
Cast their cumbersome plaids aside,
And, as hedge-like moved their columns;‡

Danger scorned, and death defied.

Louder blared the Royal trumpet—
Hoarser rolled the kettle-drum,
As the carbined chargers, neighing,
Forward to the onset came:
Torrent-like, amid the tarts,
Splashed the horsemen's red array;

But stood firm that dingy phalanx,
Like the rock before the spray.

To that grim salute the rifles
With a running fire replied:
Can it be, in spite of Gardiner,
That his troopers swerve aside?
Vainly, to impede their panic,
Wheeled his horse and waved his sword;
Vainly he appealed to duty,
Cheered them, checked them, and implored.

As the ocean swell, resistless,
Backward bears the yielding dike,
So the Gael bore down the Saxon,
Mingling bayonet, blade, and pike:
Resolutely Cope and Hawley
Propped the ranks that gave a-way;

While, though vainly, Home and Huntley
Battled to retrieve the day.

Horseless, with his knee on greenward,
As the life-blood from him poured,
"Rally, rally here!" cried Gardiner,
And aloft he waved his sword,
Round him fought a band devoted,
Till he sank upon the field;

Truer hero, Greek or Roman,
Ne'er was lifeless borne on shield!

Wo! for good and gallant Gardiner,
For the soldier and the saint;
Peace's lamb, and battle's lion,
Chivalry without a taint!
Asks the patriot for his tombstone?§
All unmarked his ashes lie;

But the soldier-friend of Doddridge||
Owns a name not soon to die!

From that ill-starred field of slaughter
Fled the panic-struck in swarms;
Strewed were all the paths to Bankton,
And to Wallyford, with arms;
Or to Dolphinstown and Birsie,
Fingalton and Prestonpans,
Rushed the fugitives, fear-scattered,
And pursued the shouting clans.

Day of triumph for the Stuart!
Fitful burst of sunny light!
And, at Falkirk, yet another,
Ere set in Culloden's night:
Then with eagles on the corral,
Or with foxes under ground,
Hunted—homeless—and an hungered,*
Might thy rival, Guelph, be found.

Dismal, too, their after fortunes,
Who, in that mistaken cause,
By a zeal and faith unshaken,
Sought and won the world's applause:
Those laid life down on the scaffold—
These were scattered far and wide—
And, from foreign shores, in exile,
Looked to Scotland ere they died!

Looked to—yearned for—Scotland's mountains;
For the glen in purple glow;
For the castle on its islet,
Mirrored in the loch below;
For the shelting, wood-and-stream-girt,
Where Romance Youth's summer sped;
For the belfy by the gray kirk,
In whose shadow slept their dead.

Yet full long, from lips of fervour,
When the natal day came round,
Toasted was the name forbidden,
With a quenchless love profound;
And in bosom or in bonnet,
Still the emblem—Rose of White—†
Told the wearer, though he spake not,
Heart and soul a Jacobite!

Under Westfield's Thorn-tree standing,
Here Cockenzie—there Tranent—
On the fields we picture, map-like,
How the battle came and went:
Round are ranged the sheaves of harvest;
This is Preston; where are they
Who were victors, who were vanquished,
Just a hundred years this day?

In that question lies its answer:—
None who wished and watched the sun
On that morn of stormy warfare,
Now behold its beams—not one!
Year by year, Time's scythe hath thinned them,
Till have vanished quite, at length,
Even the scattered few surviving
Last, by reason of more strength.

Newer wars and woes have followed,
Other fields been fought and won;
Each fresh generation wrapt in
Aims and objects of its own:
And as, loitering, the wayfarer
Casts on Preston crofts his eye,
Deeply from the Past and Present
Reads his heart a homily!

HISTORY.

History is the resurrection of ages past; it gives us the scenes of human life, that, by their acts, we may learn to correct and improve. What can be more profitable to man, than, by an easy change and a delightful entertainment, to make himself wise by the imitation of heroic virtues, or by the evitation of detected vices?—where the glorious actions of the worthiest treaders on the world's stage shall become our guide and conduct, and the errors that the weak have fallen into shall be marked out to us as rocks that we ought to avoid. It is learning wisdom at the cost of others; and, what is rare, it makes a man the better for being pleased.—*Feltham.*

* The three great romantic episodes of modern warfare have always seemed to me—those of Charles Edward and his Highlanders in 1745; of Toussaint L'Ouverture and his Haytians; and of Hofer and the Tyrolese in 1813. When we take into consideration the results flowing from the defeat of Culloden, and that the faith of a poor people was proof against the most tempting rewards, in a cause, moreover, where everything was to be lost, and nothing could be gained, the first of the three is certainly the most extraordinary.

† The white rose and the white cockade were the Stuart insignia; and, as such, respected and venerated by their partisans.

* This scene has been touched with a pencil of light in Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xviii. — At this moment the sun, which was now risen above the horizon, dispelled the mist. The vapours rose like a curtain, and showed the two armies in the act of closing, &c.

† It was the emphatic custom of the Highlanders, says Mr. Chambers, "before an onset to *scrug* their bonnets—that is, to pull their little blue caps down over their brows—so as to insure them against falling off in the ensuing *meleé*."—*History of Rebellion*, chap. xxiv.

‡ An eye-witness of the battle, in a communication inserted in the Scots Magazine of the day, describes their approach by this characteristic similitude.

§ Colonel Gardiner was buried, as were eight of his children, at the eastern gable of the old church of Tranent; but as that building was afterwards demolished for the erection of the present structure, the situation, I have understood, was built over. Before this was done, the tomb was opened, and the body showed itself in a very remarkable state of preservation; but on exposure to the air, the powdered queue, fastened by its black ribbon, dropping off, exposed the skull, with its fatal fracture—a sad proof of identity!

|| The colonel, as is well known, found an able and affectionate biographer in his celebrated friend Dr Doddridge, who, in 1747, published his "Remarkable Passages in the Life of Colonel James Gardiner"—a little work, which to this day continues to enjoy an uninterrupted popularity, and divides the winter evening hours by the rustic hearth with "The Scots Worthies," "Thomson's Seasons," and "Burns."

ANTS IN PERU.

Who can describe the countless myriads of ants which swarm through the forests? Every shrub is full of creeping life, and the decayed vegetation affords harbour for some peculiar kinds of these insects. The large yellow *puca* *cicci* is seen in multitudes in the open air, and it even penetrates into the dwellings. This insect does not bite, but its crawling creates great irritation to the skin. The small black *yana* *cicci*, on the contrary, inflicts most painful punctures. A very mischievous species of stinging ant is the black *sunchiron*. This insect inflicts a puncture with a long sting, which he carries in the rear of his body. The wound is exceedingly painful, and is sometimes attended by dangerous consequences. My travelling companion, C. Klee, being stung by one of these ants, suffered such severe pain and fever, that he was for a short while delirious. A few nights afterwards, a similar attack was made on myself during sleep. It suddenly awoke me, and caused me to start up with a convulsive spring. I must confess that I never, in my whole life, experienced such severe pain as I did at that moment. A most remarkable phenomenon is exhibited by the swarms of the species called 'the great wandering ant.' They appear suddenly in trains of countless myriads, and proceed forward in a straight direction, without stopping. The small, the weak, and the neuter are placed in the centre, while the large and the strong flank the army, and look out for prey. These swarms, called by the natives *chaos*, sometimes enter a hut and clear it of all insects, amphibia, and other disagreeable guests. This work being accomplished, they again form themselves into a long train, and move onwards. The united force of these small creatures is vast, and there is no approach to the fabulous, when it is related that not only snakes, but also large mammalia, such as agoutis, armadillos, &c. on being surprised by them, are soon killed. On the light dry parts of the higher montanas we find the large conical dwellings of the *Termes* so firmly built, that they are impenetrable even to rifle-shot. They sometimes stand singly, sometimes together, in long lines. In form they strongly resemble the simple, conical *Puna* hats.—*Dr. von Tschudi.*

CLOTHING FOR THE YOUNG.

Are the little 'Highlanders' whom we meet during three out of the four quarters of the year under the guardianship of their nurserymaids, dawdling about the streets in our public walks or squares, properly protected from the cold? Are the fantastically-attired children whom we see 'taking an airing' in carriages in our parks, sufficiently and properly clad? If these questions can be truly answered in the affirmative, then, and then only, my remarks are needless. There can enter into the parent mind no more baneful idea than that of rendering children 'hardy' by exposing them unnecessarily to cold, and by clothing them inefficiently. I have known instances wherein parents, acting on this principle, have failed entirely in rearing their offspring. Does nature treat her progeny thus? Does she not, first of all, insure the birth of her young only at a kindly season, and then provide them with downy coverings, warm nests, and assiduous protectors? And we must imitate nature, if we would give to Britain a race capable and worthy of maintaining her independence and honour. The little denizens of a warm nursery must not be subjected, without a carefully-assorted covering, to the piercing and relentless east or north-east wind; they must not be permitted to imbibe the seeds of that dreadful scourge of this climate—consumption—in their walks for exercise and health; they must be tended, as the future lords of the earth, with jealous care and judicious zeal. *One-sixth of the deaths of young children, it must be remembered, result from cold.*—*Erasmus Wilson.*

CALIFORNIAN HOUSES.

Externally, the habitations have a cheerless aspect, in consequence of the paucity of windows, which are almost unattainable luxuries. Glass is rendered ruinously dear by the exorbitant duties, while parchment, surely a better substitute than a cubic yard of adobes, is clearly inadmissible in California, on account of the trouble of its preparation; and, to increase the expense, carpenters are equally extravagant and saucy, charging three dollars for such a day's work as one is likely to get from fellows that will not labour more than three days in the week. After all, perhaps the Californians do not feel the privation of

light to be an evil. While it certainly makes the rooms cooler, it cannot, by any possibility, interfere with the occupations of those who do nothing; and even for the purposes of ventilation, windows are hardly needed, inasmuch as the bedding, the only thing that requires fresh air, is daily exposed to the sun and wind. Among the Californian housewives, the bed is quite a show, enjoying, as it does, the full benefit of contrast. While the other furniture consists of a deal-table and some badly-made chairs, with probably a Dutch clock and an old looking-glass, the bed ostentatiously challenges admiration, with its snowy sheets fringed with lace, its pile of soft pillows covered with the finest linen or the richest satin, and its well-arranged drapery of costly and tasteful curtains. Still, notwithstanding the washings and the airings, this bed is but a whitened sepulchre, concealing in the interior a pestilential wool mattress, the impregnable stronghold of millions of *las pulgas*.—*Sir George Simpson.*

PROPAGATION OF THOUGHT.

Who shall say at what point in the stream of time the personal character of any individual now on the earth shall cease to influence? A sentiment, a habit of feeling once communicated to another mind is gone; it is beyond recall; it bore the stamp of virtue; it is blessed man, and owned by Heaven: its character was evil; vain the remorse that would revoke it, vain the gnawing anxiety that would compute its mischief; its immediate, and to us visible, effect may soon be spent; its remote one, who shall calculate? The oak which waves in our forest to-day, owes its form, its species, and its tint to the acorn which dropped from its remote ancestor, under whose shade Druids worshipped. 'Human life extends beyond the threescore years and ten which bound its visible existence here.' The spirit is removed into another region, the body is crumbling into dust, the very name is forgotten upon earth; but living and working still is the influence generated by the moral features of him who has so long since passed away. The characters of the dead are inwrought into those of the living, the generation below the sod formed that which now dwells and acts upon the earth, the existing generation is moulding that which succeed it, and distant posterity shall inherit the characteristics which we infuse into our children to-day.—*The Parent's High Commission.*

MORAL EFFECTS OF PESTILENCE.

All witnesses, and a knowledge of our common nature, tell us that the continual recurrence of these scenes of sickness and death, instead of softening the heart, usually hardens it. Read the accounts of all great plagues: the plague at Athens—the plague at Milan, as described either in the historians of the day and the biographers of Cardinal Borromeo, or in the more popular pages of the best Italian novel, the 'Promessi Sposi'—read the account of the plague in London—and you will see that in all these cases the bulk of the people become more reckless and profligate than ever.—*Viscount Elvington.*

SMALL LOAVES.

It is a sound dietetic observation, that bread, if wished to be as easily digested as possible, should be baked in small loaves. The principal reason for this is, that the products of fermentation, which are obstructive to digestion, escape more completely from a small loaf than from a large one. There is, moreover, less necessity for putting the bread into a very hot oven, or for keeping it in the oven so long a time as to deprive the outer part of its nutritive qualities. Bread baked in small loaves is sweeter to the taste than when baked in large loaves; and this is probably because it is more entirely freed from the products of fermentation.—*Robertson on Diet and Regimen.*

THE AFFECTIONS.

It appears unaccountable that our teachers generally have directed their instructions to the head, with very little attention to the heart. From Aristotle down to Locke, books without number have been composed for cultivating and improving the understanding; but few, in proportion, for cultivating and improving the affections.—*Lord Kames.*

Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by D. CHAMBERS, 98 Miller Street, Glasgow; W. S. ORR, 147 Strand, and Amen Corner, London; and J. M'GLASHAN, 21 O'Conor Street, Dublin.—Printed by W. and R. CHAMBERS, Edinburgh.

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